



Australian Bureau of Statistics

6523.0 - Income Distribution, Australia, 1996-97

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Household income survey shows effect of life cycle - ABS

In 1996-97 the average weekly income received by couple families was \$890, by one-parent families \$432 and by single persons \$391, according to results from the latest household survey of income released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The results show a strong relationship between levels of income and life-cycle stages.

- Young independent single persons aged under 25 had an average weekly income of \$334. This rose to \$524 for single persons aged between 25 and 34, reflecting their higher employment rates and higher salaries. As young people enter into relationships their income rises as they often have two income earners contributing to their family income. Young couples under 35 with no dependent children received an average of \$1,091 a week.
- The birth of children and the early years of child rearing are associated with reduced labour force participation of parents and lower income levels. The average income of couples with young children, eldest under 5, was \$839 per week. Income of couples with children increased with the age of children, in part reflecting the higher participation in paid employment of both partners. Couples with older children, eldest 15 to 24, had an average income of \$1,171 a week. In 1996-97, 16 per cent of couples with the oldest child under 5 had both partners working full time. This increased to 20 per cent of couples with the oldest child aged between 5 and 14, and 36 per cent for couples with the oldest child aged 15 to 24.
- The average weekly income of one-parent families was \$432 in 1996-97. Almost two thirds of one-parent families received most of their income from government pensions and benefits. This group had an average weekly income of \$319. The majority of the other one-parent families relied on earnings as their main source of income and had an average weekly income of \$682.
- The level of income received by couple families is at its peak when they are between 45 and 54 years, at \$1,090 a week. As parents age and children become independent, income again declines, reflecting a steady decline in labour force participation. In 1996-97 couples aged 55 to 64 received an average income of \$710 a week. A third of couples in this age group had neither partner employed.
- The considerably lower incomes that accompany retirement are evident in the average incomes of those aged 65 years and over. In 1996-97 the average weekly income was \$481 for couples and \$242 for single persons in this age group.

Further details are in **Income Distribution, Australia, 1996-97** (cat. no. 6523.0) which is

available from ABS bookshops.

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